



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE VOCABULARY OF HIGH-SCHOOL LATIN AND HOW TO MASTER IT ¹

BY JOHN TETLOW
Girls' Latin School, Boston, Mass.

In November, 1907, Professor Lodge, of Columbia University, published a book entitled, *Vocabulary of High-School Latin*. This book contains an alphabetical list of 2,000 numbered words that occur five times or more in the following Latin texts: the first five books of Caesar's *Gallic War*; the four *Catilinarian Speeches*, the *Manilian Law*, and the *Archias* of Cicero; and the first six books of Vergil's *Aeneid*.

In his preface, Professor Lodge thus describes the way in which he uses this vocabulary of 2,000 numbered words:

I give to my classes at the end of every lesson the words in this list that are to be found in the next lesson, with the number attached. They write them in a notebook numbered from 1 to 2,000. They are under promise to use no dictionary but the one that is being made by themselves. The other words, being unimportant, I supply the meanings of.

In another part of his preface Professor Lodge says:

A student who has at his command these 2,000 words will have the vocabulary of fully nine-tenths of all the ordinary Latin that he is likely to come into contact with. . . . Now the final step in securing the definiteness in high-school teaching that is so necessary is for the colleges to insist upon the ability to read Latin at sight with fair accuracy and, with this end in view, to demand the knowledge of a limited number of words of common occurrence, other words to be explained in footnotes to the passages set. Teachers will then know just what to expect, and the reading and marking of sight papers will easily be reduced to scientific accuracy.

In the *Classical Weekly* of December 7, 1907, Professor Lodge wrote:

We are informed by some that vocabulary is best learned by continual reading, continued thumbing of the lexicon, and that it is pedagogically unsound to demand

¹ A paper read before the Eastern Massachusetts Section of the Classical Association of New England, at the Second Annual Meeting, held at Boston University, February 13, 1909.

of a pupil that he commit to memory lists of words. . . . I am in some sympathy with the objection to the committing to memory of lists of words; but the chief fault lies in the first statement: continual reading will only produce a knowledge of vocabulary if either the words occur time and again, or if some definite attempt is made to fix the attention upon word meaning as the reading progresses.

In the next issue of the *Classical Weekly*, December 14, 1907, Professor Lodge wrote:

This means . . . the keeping of a definite list of words, adding to it day by day, so that the pupil's equipment may grow under his own and his teacher's eyes.

In the *Educational Review* for April, 1908, Professor Harry Thurston Peck, of Columbia University, in an article on the simplification of language teaching, wrote in part as follows:

In the future, the ideal college requirement in Latin would be based upon the mastery of the 2,000 words contained in Professor Lodge's book as occurring five times or more, supplemented by a reasonable amount of grammatical work, including prosody, composition, a careful study of some prescribed portion of Latin literature—not too long—and the translation of a passage of moderate difficulty to be rendered into English at sight. In this last test, the student should be furnished with the meaning of all words not included in the prescribed list of 2,000.

On April 25, 1908, the Classical Association of the Middle States and Maryland, at its meeting in Washington, adopted for recommendation a specific plan of college-entrance examinations, including as one of the requirements for admission to college: "a thorough knowledge of a vocabulary of 2,000 Latin words and their English equivalents."

In the *School Review* for October, 1908, Professor Charles Knapp, of Barnard College, Columbia University, writing in support of the foregoing proposed requirement, said:

The schoolmaster now knows exactly what words will be of most service to himself and to his pupils; he knows also in what order these most useful words should be taught. The work can be made at every point definite; the pupil's progress in the mastery of the select vocabulary can be tested with mathematical accuracy.

In the *Educational Review* of the next month, November, 1908, Professor Knapp, recurring to the same subject, wrote:

It will be most helpful if I begin . . . by setting forth a scheme of entrance examinations which has as its cornerstone the book by Professor Lodge, with its

select list of 2,000 words. . . . At first blush, a list of 2,000 words seems a good deal to require. But in a high-school course of four years (each of about 170 school days) the pupils will be required to master about three words per school day—no Herculean task.

The foregoing quoted passages, briefly interpreted, seem to yield the following propositions:

1. All Latin words have approximately exact English equivalents.
2. When these English equivalents have been mastered by the memory, they can be applied to new passages of Latin and be made to yield the sense.
3. In sight-examination papers the English equivalents of all words not contained in the prescribed list of 2,000 should be given in footnotes.
4. The most important factor in the attainment of ability to read Latin at sight is the mastery of the English equivalents of the Latin words most frequently met in reading.

Now, I cannot afford to be dogmatic in the discussion of these propositions, and I certainly ought to be open-minded enough to listen with respectful attention and to weigh without prejudice whatever can be said in their support. But at present, and until further enlightened, I am obliged to challenge every one of them. Let us examine them in the order in which I have stated them.

1. As to the assumption that all Latin words have approximately exact English equivalents, it is to be noted that Latin words may be divided, with reference to their translatability, into several classes. In the case of investigations requiring scientific accuracy and completeness, all the distinctions underlying these several classes would have to be taken into account. But, as my present purpose is illustration merely and not exhaustive analysis, a very rough classification will suffice. Dismissing therefore from consideration all intermediate classes, I will take into account two classes only, and these I will call the easy and the difficult. Moreover, as being numerous enough for purposes of illustration and not too numerous to be readily held in mind for immediate discussion, I will consider five examples of each class. They shall all be taken from Professor Lodge's list of 2,000 words.

As examples of the easy class I will take: *annus*, "year"; *miles*,

"soldier;" *bellum*, "war;" *pater*, "father;" *oculus*, "eye." I do not mean to say that the connotations of these Latin words and the English words by which I have translated them are identical. Indeed, it would scarcely be an exaggeration to say that no two interchangeable words of different languages are identical in the content and scope of their meanings. But for practical purposes the English words "year," "soldier," "war," "father," and "eye" may be treated as the English equivalents of *annus*, *miles*, *bellum*, *pater*, and *oculus* respectively. If all Latin words were like these five examples, and if moreover the idioms, constructions, and figurative usages of Latin and English were identical, it would be quite practicable for a handy vocabulary of interchangeable words to be compiled that would satisfactorily meet all demands. But words of this class, if frequently met in reading, are so easy to remember and interpret, that the pupil does not need the elaborate machinery of a special word-list to enable him to recognize and reproduce them at need. The difficulty experienced by the pupil in turning Latin into English does not lie in words like these. If all words were of this class, probably no need of a word-list or other artificial device for the reinforcement of the memory would ever have been felt.

As examples of the difficult class of words, I will take: *ratio*, *ars*, *res*, *ingenium*, *virtus*. As we should expect from Professor Lodge's high reputation as a classical scholar and teacher, his *Vocabulary of High-School Latin* treats these more difficult words, as to primary meanings, orderly development of derived meanings, and discriminating sense of fitness in the choice of interpretative English words, both worthily and adequately; but, as we should also expect from the nature of the problem to be solved, a thorough verbal mastery of the definitions he gives would afford no direct help where help would be most appreciated. This is as it should be. If dictionaries and vocabularies were mere keys to translate by, the fine art of translation would be a mere mechanical process, and the study of Latin would have very little disciplinary value. But to proceed to the five examples selected:

Ratio is defined by Professor Lodge as "a thinking," "reckoning;" hence, in many senses, as "method" or "way;" "account;" "system" or "plan;" "consideration" or "reason," etc.

But in a familiar passage in the *Archias* the English equivalent of *ratio* is "theoretical knowledge," and in the sight passage from the *Pro Sestio* set last June at Harvard College the English equivalent is "course" or "line of conduct." Professor Lodge's definition of *ars* is "'skill, art' in all meanings, good and bad." These are good and sufficient vocabulary definitions; and, when Cicero is talking about the *artem* of the actor Roscius, "art" is a satisfactory English equivalent for the word. But when he is speaking of *eis artibus quibus aetas puerilis ad humanitatem informari solet*, the English equivalent of *artibus* is "branches of study." Professor Lodge defines *res* as "thing," and adds:

used in innumerable senses and in very many phrases; hence to be translated according to the context. Note especially *res publica*, "commonwealth;" *res familiaris*, "family property," "estate;" *res militaris*, "art of war;" *res novae*, "revolution," etc.

This is a good and adequate treatment of *res*; but sometimes the English equivalent required is "services," sometimes "achievements," sometimes "facts," sometimes "circumstances," etc.; and, so far as Professor Lodge's vocabulary is concerned, the pupil is left to his own resources, as he should be, for the discovery of the proper English equivalent in a given case. Professor Lodge defines *ingenium* as: "Lit. 'inborn quality;' hence, 'disposition,' 'temperament;' then, 'ability,' 'genius.'" There is nothing here to find fault with, but everything to commend; and, when Cicero speaks of Archias as *hominem ingenio tanto*, the English equivalent "ability" or "genius" afforded by the vocabulary definition fits well. But when in the next line he speaks of Archias as having been sought out *summorum hominum ingeniis*, he means not "by the genius of the most eminent men," but "by men of the highest genius;" and when, calling attention to the difference of mental aptitude required for the attainment of success in poetry and in forensic eloquence, he uses the expression *alia facultas ingeni*, he means what we should call in English "a different mental endowment." In the last two examples—and they are typical—the difficulty in translation is due to the imperative need of a change of constructions, and such a need no mere verbal definitions can supply. Again, Professor Lodge defines *virtus* as: "'manliness,' 'valor;' plur., 'virtues.'" But when Cicero, in the speech for the

Manilian Law, speaks of the four essential qualifications of a consummate military commander, he makes *virtus* one of them; and that he does not mean either "manliness" or "valor" is plain from the fact that he speaks of it as something distinct from *fortitudo in periculis*. The English equivalent for what he means seems to be "energy." In the same passage, the plural *virtutes* may adequately be rendered by the English equivalent "important qualifications." Again, when he speaks of the welcome which Archias received in the aristocratic circles of Rome as a proof not only of his ability and literary accomplishments but also *naturae atque virtutis*, he means his "inborn excellence" or "sterling worth of character."

It would seem, then, from the examples I have given, that, when the vocabulary definitions, excellent as they are, of the word-list which Professor Knapp proposes to make the cornerstone of a reformed scheme of entrance examinations are applied to the translation of easy words, where no help is needed, they work well; but that, when they are applied to the translation of difficult words, where help is sometimes desperately needed, they simply break down under the strain put upon them.

2. The second proposition embodied in the quoted passages with which I began this paper is that, when the so-called English equivalents of Latin words have been thoroughly mastered by the memory, they can be applied to a connected passage of Latin text and be made to yield the sense. But translation, as I have already partly shown, is not a process of mechanical substitution; it is a fine art. No dictionary, however complete, and certainly no abridged vocabulary, however thoroughly mastered, can relieve the student of the laborious and thoughtful, but at the same time disciplinary and rewarding exercise of invention, of discovery, and of imaginative creation involved in the difficult art of translation from Latin into English. No vocabulary, however exact in its terms, orderly in the development of its definitions, or rich in its suggestiveness, can of itself bestow on the pupil who faithfully masters it the power either to divine the sense of a passage embodying sustained thought or, when the sense has been apprehended, to reproduce it in clear, idiomatic English. But assertion may be met by counter-assertion, and mere assertion is always inconclusive. The best way to establish conclusively the

insufficiency of vocabulary definitions is to apply them to a passage from a Latin author; and, as Professor Lodge's vocabulary of 2,000 words is admittedly a good one, I will apply it to the passage set last June for the advanced examination in translation at sight at Harvard College. The passage is from the speech of Sestius. I will first give a reasonably close, but, I hope, clear translation of the passage, and afterward such a translation as the vocabulary definitions of Professor Lodge's word-list yield.

Vos, adulescentes, et qui nobiles estis, ad *maiorum* vestrorum *imitationem* excitabo, et qui ingenio ac virtute nobilitatem potestis consequi, ad eam rationem in qua multi homines novi et honore et gloria floruerunt cohortabor. Haec est una via, mihi credite, et laudis et dignitatis et honoris: a bonis viris sapientibus et bene natura constitutis laudari et diligi, nosse *descriptionem* civitatis *maioribus* nostris sapientissime constitutam, qui, cum regum potestatem non tulissent, ita magistratus annuos creaverunt, ut consilium senatus rei publicae praeponerent sempiternum, deligerentur autem in id consilium ab universo populo, aditusque in illum summum ordinem omnium civium *industriæ* ac virtuti pateret; senatum rei publicae custodem, *praesidem*, *propugnatorem* conlocaverunt; huius ordinis auctoritate uti magistratus, et quasi *ministros* gravissimi consilii esse voluerunt; senatum autem ipsum proximorum ordinum *splendorem* confirmare, plebis libertatem et commoda tueri atque augere voluerunt. Haec qui pro *virili* parte defendunt, *optimates* sunt, cuiuscumque sunt ordinis.—Cicero, *Pro Sestio*, 137, 138.

To such of you, young men, as are of noble birth, I shall appeal to follow in the footsteps of your forefathers; such of you as are able to achieve nobility by talent and merit I shall urge to pursue that course by which many men without noble ancestry have won great honor and glory. The only path, believe me, that leads to praise, reputation, and honor is this: to win the commendation and esteem of men of worth who are both sensible and right-minded, and to be familiar with the characteristic features of the constitution of the commonwealth as they have been most wisely molded by our forefathers. For, when our forefathers had overthrown the power of their kings, they set up in their stead annual magistrates, but under these safeguards: they provided that a council of elders should be in permanent control of the commonwealth; that men should be elected to membership in that council by all the people; and that access to that supreme body should be open to all citizens of industry and merit. They made this senate the guardian, the leader, and the defender of the commonwealth. They required the magistrates to act under the authority of this body and to be as it were the servants of this supreme council. They required, moreover, that the senate itself should strengthen the prestige of the next lower orders, and that it should guard and foster the liberty and interests of the common people. Those

who defend these principles to the best of their ability are nobles, to whatever order they belong.

Before giving the translation which the vocabulary definitions of the Latin words contained in this passage yield, let me say, in anticipation of the possible objection that such a use of any vocabulary is unfair, that it seems to me that this is the only method by which the specific contribution made by a thoroughly mastered vocabulary taken by itself, without any admixture of the extraneous elements which good instruction by the teacher and intelligent study by the pupil contribute to the final result, can be ascertained. So far as these other elements are concerned, they are no more to be credited to a special vocabulary like that prepared by Professor Lodge than to the ordinary vocabulary which is appended to school editions of the text read. As we have to do here solely with the effective share contributed to the attainment of ability to read Latin at sight by the special vocabulary the thorough mastery of which has been so strenuously advocated, the proper inquiry for us to make is: "Just what does the vocabulary as such, the vocabulary pure and simple, contribute to the final result?" The translation, then, of the passage under consideration yielded by Professor Lodge's special vocabulary, supplemented, in the case of the few words that are wanting in that vocabulary, by English equivalents of like character, most of which are indirectly derivable from it, is as follows:

You, young men, who are noble, I shall rouse to the imitation of your forefathers, and you who are able to attain nobility by ability and manliness I shall urge to that way in which many new men have bloomed in honor and glory. The one way, believe me, of praise, esteem, and honor is this: to be praised and cherished by good men, sensible and well put together by nature, and to know the marking-out of the state most wisely put together by our forefathers who, when they had not endured the power of kings, so created annual magistracies that they put in everlasting charge of the commonwealth a deliberative body of a council of elders, that they were selected moreover into the midst of this deliberative body by all the people together, and that access into the midst of that supreme order lay open to the industry and manliness of all the citizens; who established the senate as the guard, leader, and defender of the commonwealth; who wished the magistracies to use the authority of this order and to be as if the servants of the heaviest council; who wished the senate itself moreover to strengthen the brilliancy of the next orders, and to protect and increase the liberty and interests

of the common people. Those who defend these things in proportion to the manly part are nobles, of whatever order they are.

I think you will agree with me in the opinion that a bystander, ignorant of Latin, who should listen to the reading of such a translation from Cicero as that would be puzzled to know what it was all about, and still more puzzled to understand how Cicero ever came to be recognized as a great orator. Let me remind you again that I do not affirm that an intelligent and well-trained pupil brought up on Professor Lodge's vocabulary would necessarily make such a translation as that. I do affirm, however, that there is nothing in the thorough mastery of the mere vocabulary that would prevent him from doing so. I will go a step farther and say that a thorough mastery of the terms of this or any other set of vocabulary definitions would by its mentally fettering influence—and the more thorough the mastery the more fettering the influence—naturally tend to produce just that sort of translation. Fortunately the normal human mind has by nature the gift of resiliency and an instinct that prompts it to turn toward the light, so that, after being temporarily fettered and cramped by artificial restraints, it will rebound under the vitalizing influence of good example and sound training, and will eventually yield wholesome fruit. We must not make the mistake, however, of supposing that the flavor of the fruit that is due to the air and the sunshine and the rain, is due to the props by which we hold up the branches.

3. The next in order of the four propositions which I have challenged is: "In sight-examination papers the English equivalents of all words not contained in the prescribed list of 2,000 should be given in foot-notes." But a part of our work as teachers of Latin consists in leading our pupils, partly through systematic and partly through incidental study of word-formation, to recognize in new words roots and stems that have already been met in familiar words, and so, reasoning from the known to the unknown, to form and confidently to trust rational conjectures and inferences as to the meaning of the new. A pupil who has been so trained as to be able to construct, in the light of the context, out of recognized formative materials and suggested English derivatives, the meanings of words which as distinct individuals he has not met before, does not need and does not want to be told what he can find out for himself. Such gratuitous information

he mentally resents, and rightly. Now, in the passage set for advanced translation at sight on which I have just been commenting, there are ten words that do not occur in Professor Lodge's list of 2,000. They are in italics in the passage printed above. Two of them, *maiores* and *industria*, may have been omitted from Professor Lodge's list through inadvertence, for Mr. George H. Browne is my authority for saying that *maiores* occurs more than one hundred times in the Latin text which forms the basis of his own word-list, and *industria* more than fifty times. Indeed, such a word as *industria*, which has as its obvious English equivalent, "industry," ought not to be given in a footnote whether it occurs more than fifty times in the Latin read in high schools or not. Of the remaining eight, I question whether pupils who have been trained to recognize familiar stems in new words and to trace English words of Latin origin to the Latin words from which they are directly or indirectly derived, should have the meanings of *imitationem*, *praesidem*, *propugnatorem*, *ministros*, *splendorem*, *virile*, or *optimates* supplied. *Descriptionem civitatis*, which in my own translation of the passage under consideration I have rendered "the characteristic features of the constitution," should, of course, be interpreted in a footnote; but apart from this single expression, the difficulties in the passage are difficulties of thought and construction, not of vocabulary. I may add that, if all words not found in Professor Lodge's list of 2,000 are to appear in footnotes on the examination papers, the following words, which Mr. Browne tells us occur one hundred times in the prose text on which his word-list is based, and many others like them, will so appear hereafter: *immortalis*, *inimicus*, *innocens*, *sapientia*, *senator*, *condemno*, *praeclarus*.

4. The last of the four propositions which I feel impelled to challenge is: "The most important factor in the attainment of ability to read Latin at sight is the mastery of the English equivalents of the Latin words most frequently met in reading." Now, I can understand how the mastery of the English equivalents of Latin words that occur only five times within the limits of the so-called high-school Latin may be thought to have an important share in the achievement of ability to read Latin at sight. Such words occur often enough to deserve a secure and abiding lodgment in the memory, and yet seldom

enough to be in danger of slipping out of the memory unless they are firmly anchored there. But why should a teacher voluntarily impose on his pupils the needless drudgery of learning by rote—I will not say by heart—from a word-list the detached meanings of words that occur often enough to be gradually absorbed by the pupils without conscious effort in the course of their reading? Are words that occur twenty-five, fifty, one hundred, two hundred, five hundred, and even more times so hard to remember that they, too, must be included in a word-list that is to be thoroughly mastered? If there must be a list of detached words to be learned by rote, can it not be shortened by the omission of such words? Surely words that occur more than twenty-five times can safely be left to shift for themselves. Let us not be so distrustful, so despairing, of the powers of our pupils. Again, is there no better way of mastering new words than to stop as we meet each one, write it in a notebook, and then, from a detached list, with no context to shed light or furnish motive or yield interest, fix its various meanings, original and derived, literal and figurative, in the memory by conning their English equivalents? This sort of work, extended over a four-years' course, though limited to three words a day, has a repellent aspect. Detached words are lifeless things, and the thorough mastery of their English equivalents is, in my judgment, not the way to achieve power to read Latin. The more thorough such mastery becomes, the more likely is the English equivalent so mastered to intrude itself between the pupil's mind and the author's thought. The way to learn to read Latin at sight is to read much Latin, and the most important factor in the development of power to read Latin at sight is not the memorizing of the English equivalents of Latin words, but the formation of the habit of reading every advance assignment twice or three times through without dictionary or vocabulary, before the work of translation is begun. This is the kind of mastery of the Latin vocabulary that is of most worth.

Professor Lodge has done a highly creditable piece of work in the preparation of his *Vocabulary of High-School Latin*. Its serviceableness consists not, as it seems to me, in the use which Professor Knapp would have made of it, but in the fact that it is a scholarly, discriminating, and adequate special vocabulary of the texts usually read in secondary schools. It is a trustworthy and sufficient guide

to the meanings, the distinctions in meanings, and the syntactic and idiomatic usage prevailing in these texts. Indeed, its very merits make me apprehensive that it may tend to produce two unfortunate results. First, the use of it as a cornerstone in the work of building up a Latin vocabulary out of English equivalents, and thereby reforming college-entrance examinations, will lead to a mistaken emphasis on the mechanics of Latin study; and, secondly, its excellence as a special vocabulary of a limited number of Latin texts will tend still further to perpetuate the limitation of high-school reading to the texts to which the examinations of the College Entrance Board have already tended to confine it. Before we take the "final step" of "demanding the knowledge of a limited number of words of common occurrence" and "reducing to scientific accuracy the reading and marking of sight papers" by the method proposed, let us make sure that that method is not a hindrance instead of a help to the end desired.